

Transbay Area Plan

Transbay 2020

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Preliminary Preferred Land Use and Urban Design Alternative

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San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
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TRANSBAY 2020

PREFERRED LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN ALTERNATIVE

Transbay will be the Gateway to San Francisco, the home of up to 10,000 people, combining living and working in an exciting new way. Whether arriving by bus at the new Transbay transit terminal, entering the City from the Bay Bridge, or walking from Yerba Buena Gardens or the Financial District, all the opportunities of San Francisco will unfold before you. The Transbay area is the crossroads of the Bay Area's transportation network, a new Downtown community where South Beach residential uses, Downtown commercial uses and Yerba Buena Gardens cultural and education uses meet and merge. *Transbay 2020* will mix residences of many types, offices, retail uses, educational facilities and street-enlivening restaurants and bars. Uses will be stacked vertically or adjacent to one another in a fine mix, contributing to the neighborhood's diversity. People will live, learn, work and play in an environment where the boundaries between these activities are eased.

The new neighborhood features streets, such as Folsom, lined with broad landscaped sidewalks and buildings that mix live-work units, traditional residences and offices. A neighborhood retail center, with stores fronting on the street, invites strolling and window shopping. Views of the Bay Bridge and the Downtown skyline enhance the area's streets. The integrated system of parks, landscaped streets and alleys, allows residents and workers to be close to green spaces where they can lounge in the sun, enjoy a cup of coffee and chat with friends.

To the north, along Mission, Natoma and Minna Streets, a "campus" of schools, museums and entertainment uses provides educational, cultural and retail opportunities and creates a vibrant 24-hour mix of students, museum-goers and nighttime activity patrons. Centered on a "green", this area allows the area's schools and museums to expand, create an identifiable campus and share facilities.

The area near the new transit terminal is a bustling extension of Downtown. High-rise office towers are interspersed with landscaped walkways and open spaces where office workers can find a quiet corner in which to eat their lunch. Bus commuters and possibly train commuters from a potential new CalTrain terminal stream through a block-long green space adjacent to Beale Street between Mission and Howard Streets on their way to and from the new terminals.

Rincon Hill is an eclectic mix of live-work spaces and more traditional residential buildings, crisscrossed with pedestrian walkways and landscaped alleys.

Transbay 2020 - the Preferred Land Use and Urban Design Alternative

This preferred land use and urban design alternative - *Transbay 2020* - draws from several emerging trends that are affecting living and working patterns in San Francisco. Among these trends are:

- living and working in combined spaces facilitated by new technologies and corporate out-sourcing (consulting);
- people living and working in the Downtown area;
- empty-nesters returning to the city from the suburbs;
- multi-media designers and technicians working non-traditional hours and living near their work spaces;
- people living in the Downtown area and commuting to work in the suburbs - a trend which might grow in the future; and
- the growth of educational and cultural institutions in the Transbay area.

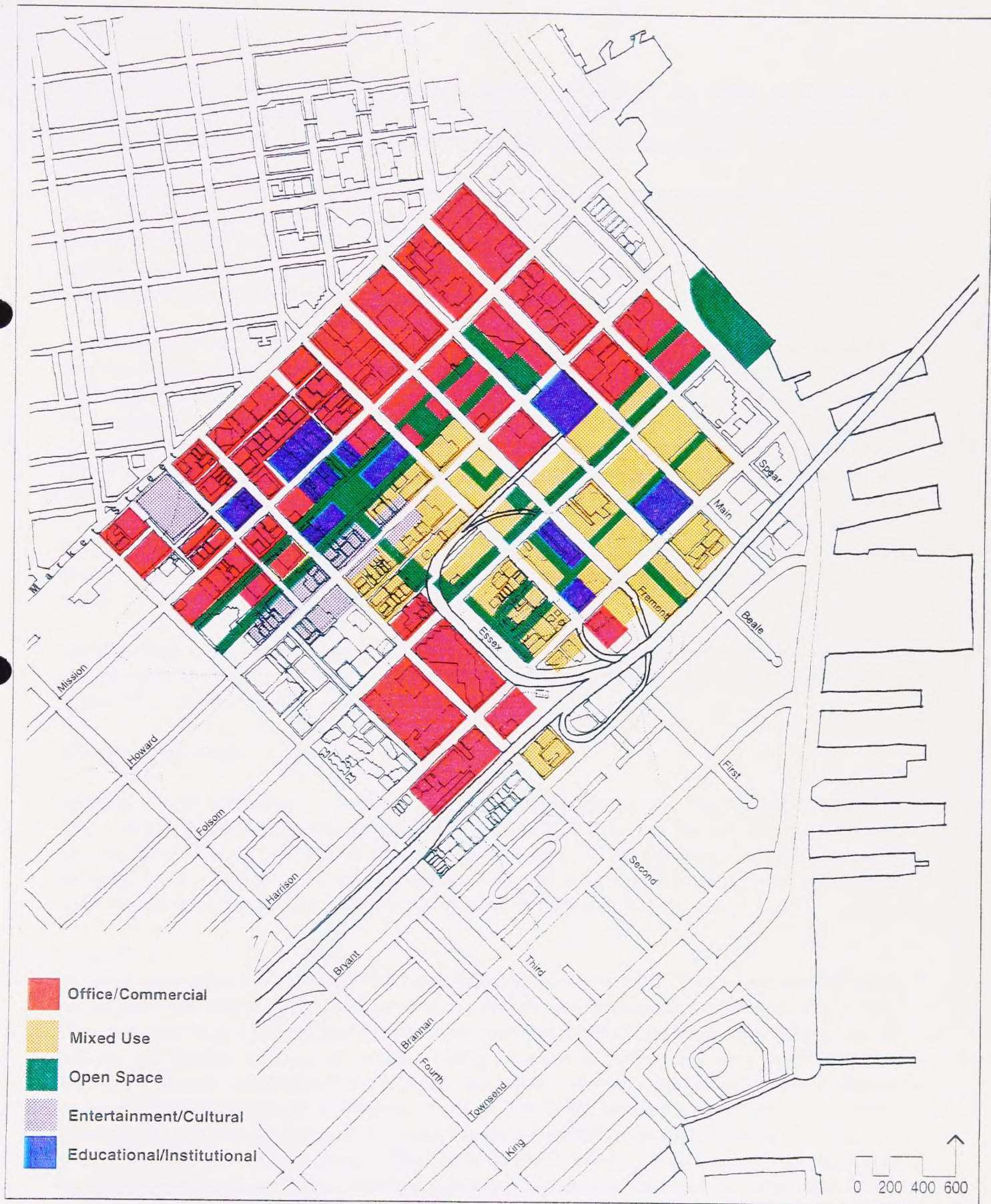
Transbay 2020 is envisioned as an exciting place in which to work and live, a new form and mix for "downtown living", accommodating a major transit hub and a wide range of uses in many variations. The preferred alternative focuses on four primary land uses - high-rise office, mixed use (residential, live-work, commercial), educational uses and entertainment/cultural uses. Several sub-areas would be distinguished by their scale, intensity of development and use emphasis. An overlying network of public and private open spaces and pedestrian-oriented streets and walkways would link the sub-areas to each other and to surrounding areas such as Yerba Buena Gardens, the Financial District and the Waterfront.

Outlined below is a brief description of the preferred alternative's major land use areas, followed by a more detailed examination of five sub-areas, the proposed open space and pedestrian network, suggested infrastructure and catalyst sites and a possible market program for the preferred alternative.

Land Use

High-rise office uses would line the Mission Street corridor and extend south to Clementina Street between Fremont and Spear Streets (**Map 1**). The high-rise office district would be reflective of the adjacent Downtown area. There are several prime opportunity sites along Mission Street and between Beale and Fremont Streets which could be developed with office towers. The new transit terminal would be located on the block(s) bounded by Howard, Main, Folsom and Beale Streets and would offer joint development potential, both within (for retail use) and above (for open space or office use) the terminal structure.

A mixed-use area offering a variety of residential and live-work opportunities interspersed with commercial uses (including neighborhood retail/service, offices, etc.) and public and private open space would line the Folsom Street corridor and extend north to Natoma Street on the west side of Fremont Street and south to the freeway/Bay Bridge on the east side of Essex Street. The mix of uses would change from block to block, although there would likely be a more commercial emphasis to the north toward Downtown and a more dominant residential component to the south toward



Transbay Area Plan
Map 1

South Beach. The advantage of a mixed-use district is flexibility - the ability to respond to a changing market. For example, multi-media and live-work uses were virtually unknown ten years ago. This proposal will allow the Transbay area to respond to the next market.

The multi-faceted residential/live-work/commercial district would draw on existing features such as the historic, small-scale fabric of the blocks between First and Second Streets, the nearby South Park area, Rincon Hill and South Beach. Within this large area there are a number of prime opportunity sites along the alleys, on Second Street, on Howard and Folsom Streets and on land currently occupied by the Transbay Terminal and its elevated ramps.

A wide range of "lifestyles" would be accommodated - families, singles, a range of income and age levels in many different housing types - rental, condominium, traditional residential and live/work units. These would be interspersed with commercial and office uses as well as community services in a variety of configurations. Multi-media and incubator offices may be attracted to the existing small-scale buildings that currently dominate much of the area. A retail center along the Folsom Street corridor could provide neighborhood shopping and services for the area's residents and workers.

Education/cultural uses, including classrooms, administrative offices, student housing, perhaps a library, student center or museum, would be concentrated in the Essex Park sub-area described below.

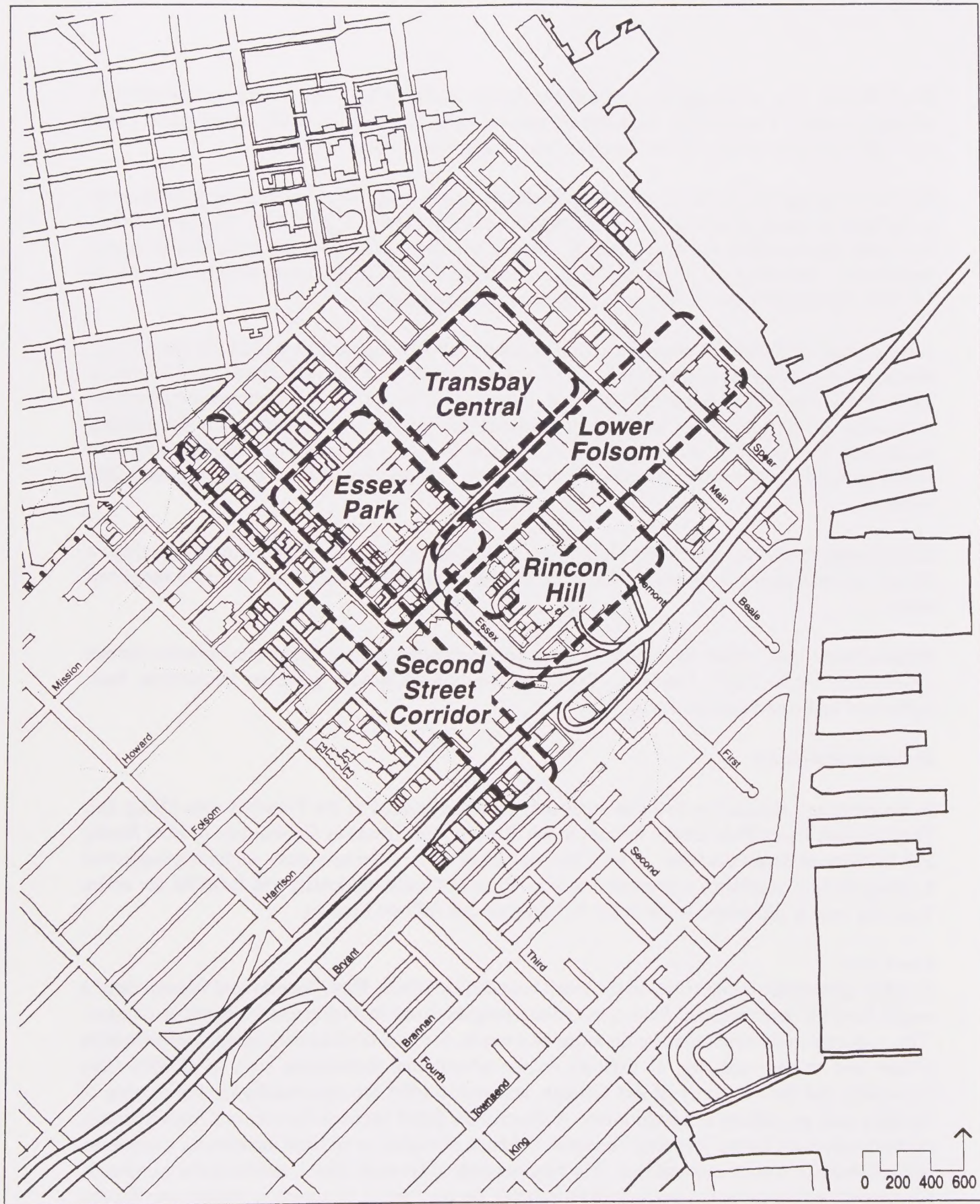
Entertainment uses would be similar to those in the existing cultural and entertainment district surrounding Yerba Buena Gardens. Typically, uses would include galleries, restaurants, bars, nightclubs and entertainment-retail.

Transbay Sub-Areas

In the preferred alternative, five sub-areas may be distinguished in the Transbay area (**Map 1a**). These include Essex Park, Lower Folsom Street, Rincon Hill, Transbay Central east of First Street, and the Second Street corridor. A brief description of each of the sub-areas, including suggested building density and form, is presented below. Proposed building density and form for the entire Transbay area is illustrated in the color 3-D graphic that follows Map 1a.

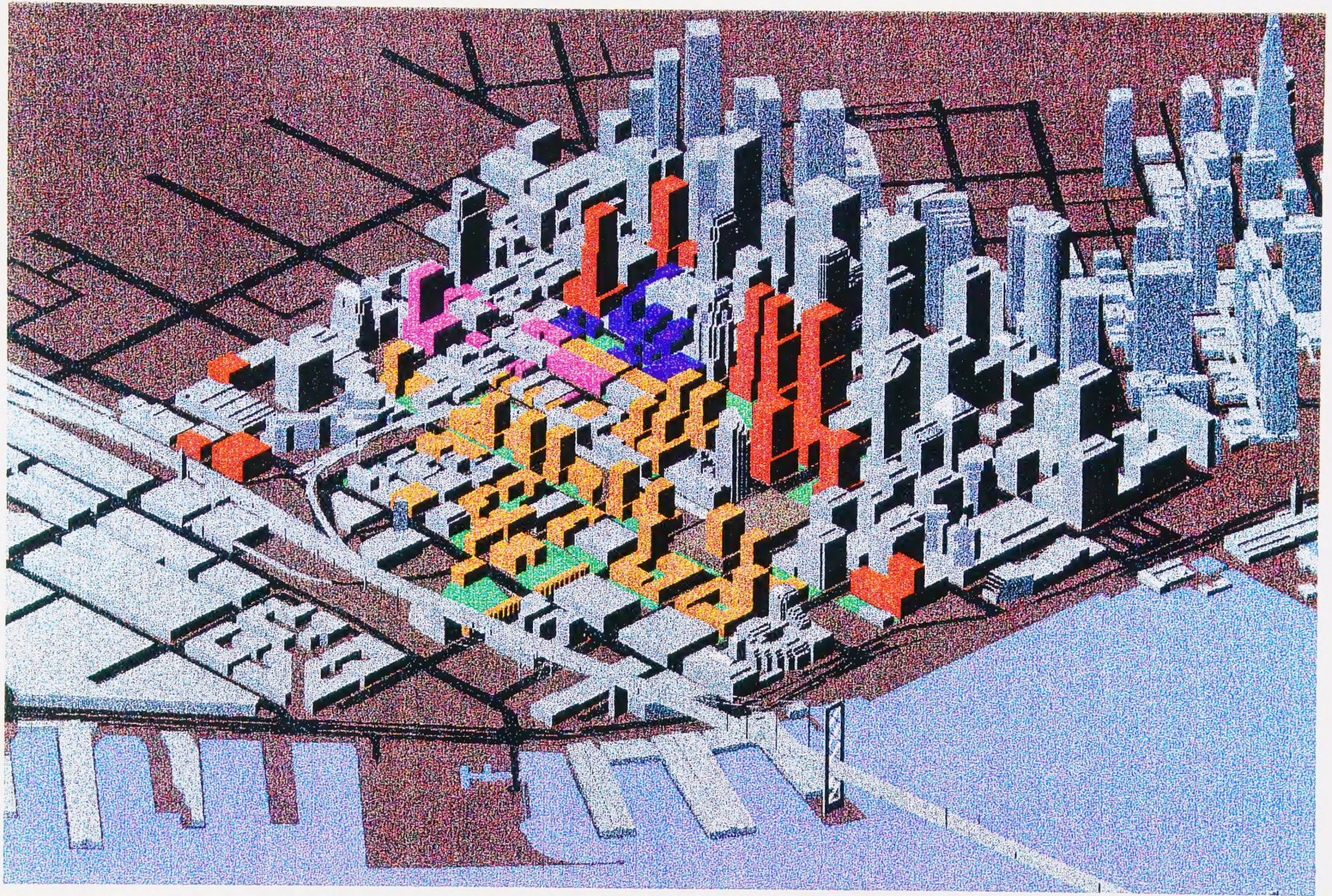
Essex Park

A public open space in the center of the block bounded by Minna, First, Natoma and Second Streets would form the heart of *Essex Park*, a mixed-use neighborhood featuring a new education campus. This sub-area could accommodate the expansion needs, in terms of classroom space, administrative offices and student housing, of existing nearby educational institutions such as Golden Gate University and the Academy of Art College, and would offer the opportunity for the sharing of facilities such as a library and auditorium. A site on First Street between Natoma and Minna Streets, currently occupied by the Transbay Terminal, has been identified as an ideal location for a museum, public library or similar cultural use. The blocks south of Howard Street, linked to the campus by landscaped pedestrian walkways, would be suitable for residential uses such as student and faculty housing, mixed with non-residential uses. Multi-media and incubator offices, for example, may be



Transbay Area Plan
Map 1a

Transbay 2020 ♦ Sub-Areas



attracted to the upper floors of the existing small-scale buildings that currently dominate much of this area.

In terms of building density and form, the existing small-scale, low-rise buildings within which much of the development would occur, dictate a lower height limit that would preserve sun access to the central open space, alleys and pedestrian walkways traversing the area.

Lower Folsom Street

The *Lower Folsom Street* sub-area is highlighted by the pedestrian orientation of Folsom Street itself - a key route to the waterfront. Wide sidewalks, street tree planting and landscaping, street furniture and special street lighting and signage would ensure an attractive route for pedestrians. Although proposed to have a residential emphasis, *Lower Folsom Street* would offer a range of use opportunities, including office space, live-work spaces, and neighborhood retail and services.

In terms of building density and form, the preferred alternative suggests that buildings on the north side of Folsom Street would appropriately house office and retail uses on the lower floors, with residential or live-work units above. Building heights of approximately 150 to 200 feet would effectively buffer residential uses from the elevated bus and auto ramps to the north. On the south side of Folsom Street, slimmer towers would be encouraged to preserve sunlight access to the Folsom Street sidewalk.

Rincon Hill

The most dominant land form in the Transbay area, *Rincon Hill* is the site of a number of existing and proposed residential and live-work projects. The preferred alternative proposes that this trend continue, but in a way that enhances the hill's physical form and provides pedestrian amenities for residents. Small-scale development is suggested for *Rincon Hill's* eastern slope, with the possibility of one or two high-rises allowed on the crest of the hill. A network of landscaped pedestrian alleys would break up the sub-area's large blocks, providing convenient connections to the Transbay area's larger system of linked open spaces.

Transbay Central

The new transit terminal, proposed for the block south of Howard Street between Main and Beale Streets, would form the centerpiece of this sub-area, which extends west to First Street and north to Mission Street. A large number of in-coming and out-going transit passengers will pass through the new terminal and its surrounding area each day. *Transbay Central* is proposed to be an extension of Downtown and will feature high-rise, high-density development clustered around the terminal structure, a central open space that would serve nearby office workers and shoppers, an open space along the east side of Beale Street between Mission and Howard Streets that would serve as a forecourt to the new transit terminal, and a system of landscaped pedestrian alleys and walkways that would effectively break up the large blocks and connect with the Transbay area's open space network.

Second Street

A primary pedestrian connection between Downtown, the South of Market area and the proposed new ballpark on the waterfront at China Basin, *Second Street* is proposed to be developed with infill

office or mixed uses on scattered sites, with retail uses such as shops and sidewalk cafes at street level to draw pedestrians along the street's length. Pedestrian street improvements such as sidewalk widening and landscaping are proposed as well. Two development sites are located at the intersection of Second and Howard Streets - the edge of the *Essex Park* sub-area - where the preferred alternative proposes an attractive mix of commercial, entertainment/cultural and educational uses.

Open Space and Pedestrian Network

In the preferred alternative, the open space network (**Map 2**) would include:

- a mid-block park on the block bounded by Mission, Fremont, Howard and First Streets to serve the high-density office district proposed for *Transbay Central* - a variant shifts the open space southward to Howard Street;
- a linear park widening to form a forecourt to the new transit terminal along the east side of Beale Street between Mission and Howard Streets;
- a mid-block park on the block bounded by Minna, First, Natoma and Second Streets to serve the educational campus and mixed uses west of First Street;
- a series of interconnected mid-block public or publicly-accessible private open spaces to facilitate pedestrian-friendly connections across the Transbay area; and
- pedestrian improvements such as sidewalk widening, special paving materials, street tree planting and landscaping, street furniture, and special street lighting and signage, along Folsom and Second Streets, as well as Mission, Beale and Howard Streets.

Infrastructure/Catalyst Sites

To attract the eclectic mix of uses proposed under the preferred alternative and build upon them for the future, improvements should consider the area's strong assets such as its proximity to Downtown, the waterfront and the site of the proposed new ballpark, the existing fabric of buildings and alleys, the favorable micro-climate, and the excellent transportation access for all modes. Moreover, the preferred alternative looks to the particularities of the emerging living/working trends - the desire for intimate, semi-residential open spaces in addition to the downtown-style open spaces, the appeal of artsy "found" environments, the use of support spaces such as service bureaus, copy centers, offices and conferencing facilities, and the need for "networking" spaces such as coffee shops, restaurants, and galleries.

To facilitate this type of urban character, public investment should be directed at developing a series of infrastructure improvements and catalyst sites - key developments which would establish the character of the Transbay area (**Map 3**). Important infrastructure improvements would include:

- an open space network that would satisfy a range of needs across the Transbay area, including passive and active uses, children's play areas, and pedestrian connections; and
- a comprehensive system of technological infrastructure, including "wired" streets.

In addition to the infrastructure improvements, six important publicly-owned catalyst sites have been

identified:

- the south side of Mission Street between First and Fremont Streets, on the edge of *Transbay Central*, proposed for high-rise office development;
- the west side of First Street between Minna and Natoma Streets, proposed for education/cultural uses, such as a museum or library;
- the northwest corner of Howard and Main Streets, adjacent to the proposed site of the new transit terminal, proposed for high-rise office development;
- the northwest corner of First and Folsom Streets, proposed for mixed-use development;
- the south side of Folsom Street between Spear and Main Streets in the *Lower Folsom Street* sub-area, proposed for mixed-use development; and
- the north side of Folsom Street between Main and Beale Streets - the south end of the proposed new transit terminal - proposed for mixed-use development.

Market Program

Program Element	Amount Proposed in this Alternative
Mixed Use	3,700 - 5,400 living units (live-work/lofts & mid-rise + high-rise apartments) and 800,000 - 2.8 million sq.ft. of office & related mixed use space
Downtown Office	2.0 - 4.8 million sq.ft. of office (5 FAR - 12 FAR)
Retail	40,000 - 80,000 sq.ft. street retail & 100,000 sq.ft. community destination retail
Hotel	1 hotel with 300 rooms
Entertainment	120,000 sq.ft. infill restaurants, clubs, galleries
Education/cultural	800,000 sq.ft. of classrooms, administration, library, student center, student residences & museum



Transbay Area Plan
Map 2

Transbay 2020 ♦ Open Space Plan



Transbay Area Plan
Map 3

SAN FRANCISCO TOMORROW
An Urban Environmental Organization

15 August, 1996

REC'D.

AUG 15 1996

**Dept. of City Planning
Plans & Programs**

From: Bernard Choden
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To: SF Planning Commission

Re: TransBay Terminal Studies

The Planning Department has demonstrated, once again, that it has the talent and professional intelligence to deal with the complexities of planning needed by our city. Their analysis and findings, however, would be far more beneficial and effective in advising the Planning Commission and other city institutions if the terminal studies also considered:

1. **The synergistic development potential inherent in the project.** Utilization of the full powers of redevelopment is a key to creation of a private-public partnership, a win-win situation, in which greater value, social and economic, is created, collectively, than can be achieved by individual investors singularly dependent on market forces. Public and private decision makers need this greater vision of what can be achieved together with, as an outcome, a very real prospect of larger private and public rewards through a trusting and cooperative development relationship.

2. **Inclusion of a Caltrain station interdependent with the development of the project.** The value created by public action, by zoning- overall design control- the pooling and underwriting of investments and infrastructure-etc., should be, in part, retrievable for common needs and most particularly for the preservation of a Caltrain service to San Francisco which is, in turn, highly dependent upon direct service to the terminal. The additional \$ 200 million necessary to bring Caltrain to the terminal is fundable if the city uses a variety of funding sources such as possessory tax increments from redevelopment, ground rents, development rights fees from the windfall values due to the creation of more intensive use zoning.

The Mayor and Board of Supervisors have decided against the inclusion of a Caltrain station at the terminal based upon an inadequate analysis of funding and development possibilities and an ill-founded fear of the redevelopment process. However, it is wrong for the department or Commission to proscribe an objective, professional exploration of these possibilities.

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